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United States Patent [19][11] **Patent Number:** **5,907,681****Bates et al.**[45] **Date of Patent:** **May 25, 1999**

[54] **INTELLIGENT METHOD, APPARATUS AND COMPUTER PROGRAM PRODUCT FOR AUTOMATED REFRESHING OF INTERNET WEB PAGES**

The Music Web Page Chat (<http://www.professionals.com/~peterc/cgi/chat.cgi>).

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[57]

ABSTRACT

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[52] U.S. Cl. **395/200.58; 395/200.62**

[58] Field of Search **395/200.53–200.64**

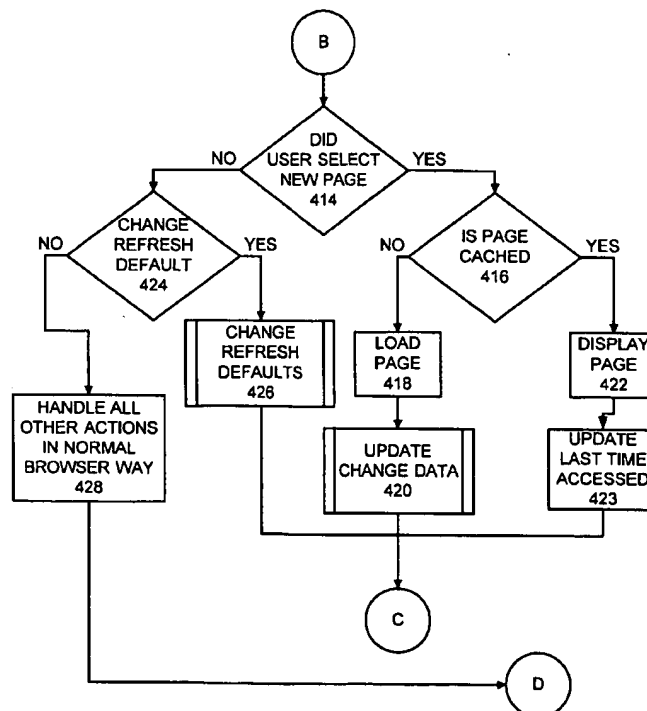
[56] **References Cited****U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS**

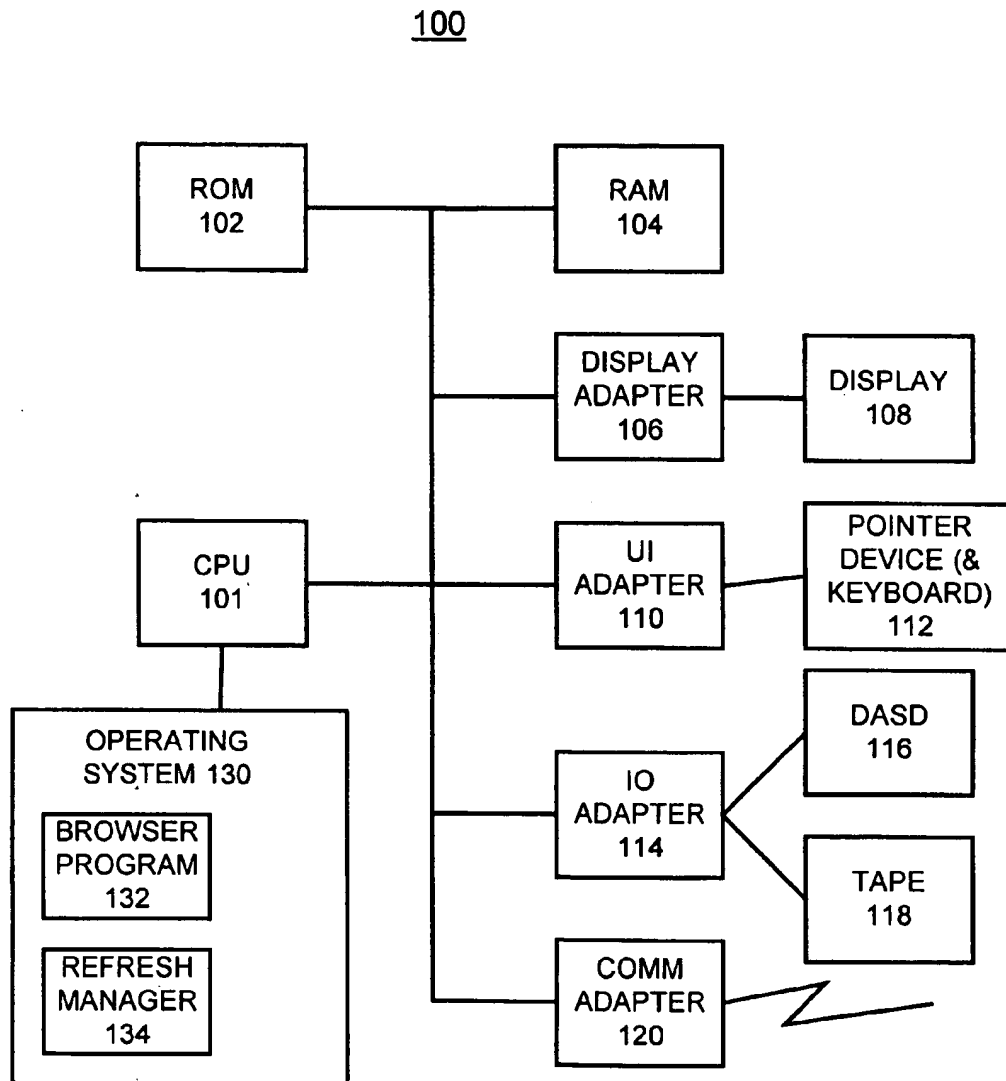
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An intelligent method, apparatus and computer program product are provided for automated refreshing of internet web pages. Page data are stored including a record of page data values for each user selected internet web page. The page data values include at least one refresh interval, a last time refreshed and a last time accessed. A user request for refreshing an internet web page is received and the internet web page is refreshed. Utilizing the refreshed internet web page, checking for changes in the refreshed internet web page is performed. Then scanning the stored page data is performed and for each user selected internet web page, the stored refresh interval is compared with a current refresh time interval. For each user selected internet web page, responsive to the current refresh time interval being greater than the stored refresh time interval, the internet web page is refreshed. A feedback message is sent to the user responsive to refreshing an internet web page and the stored refresh interval is updated.

10 Claims, 12 Drawing Sheets

FIG.1

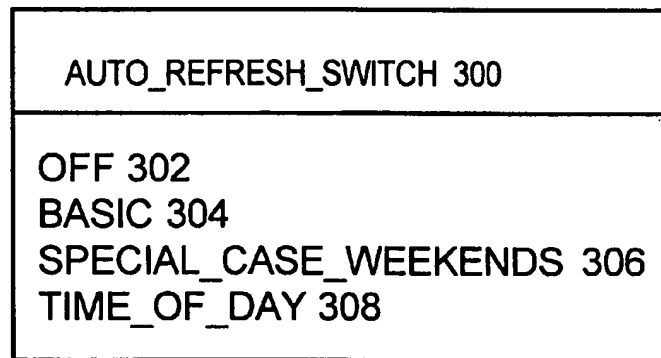
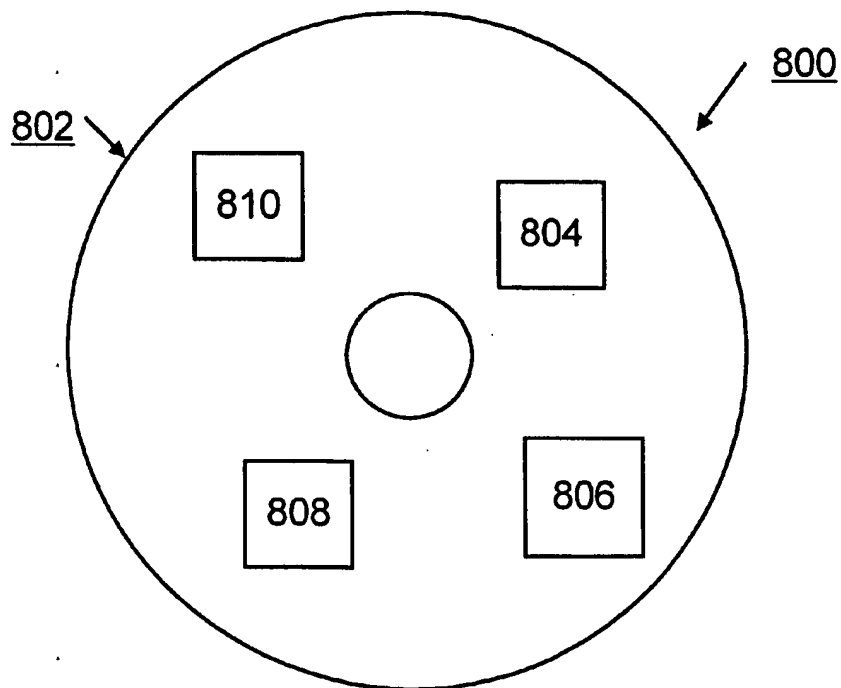
DATA STRUCTURES

PAGE DATA 200

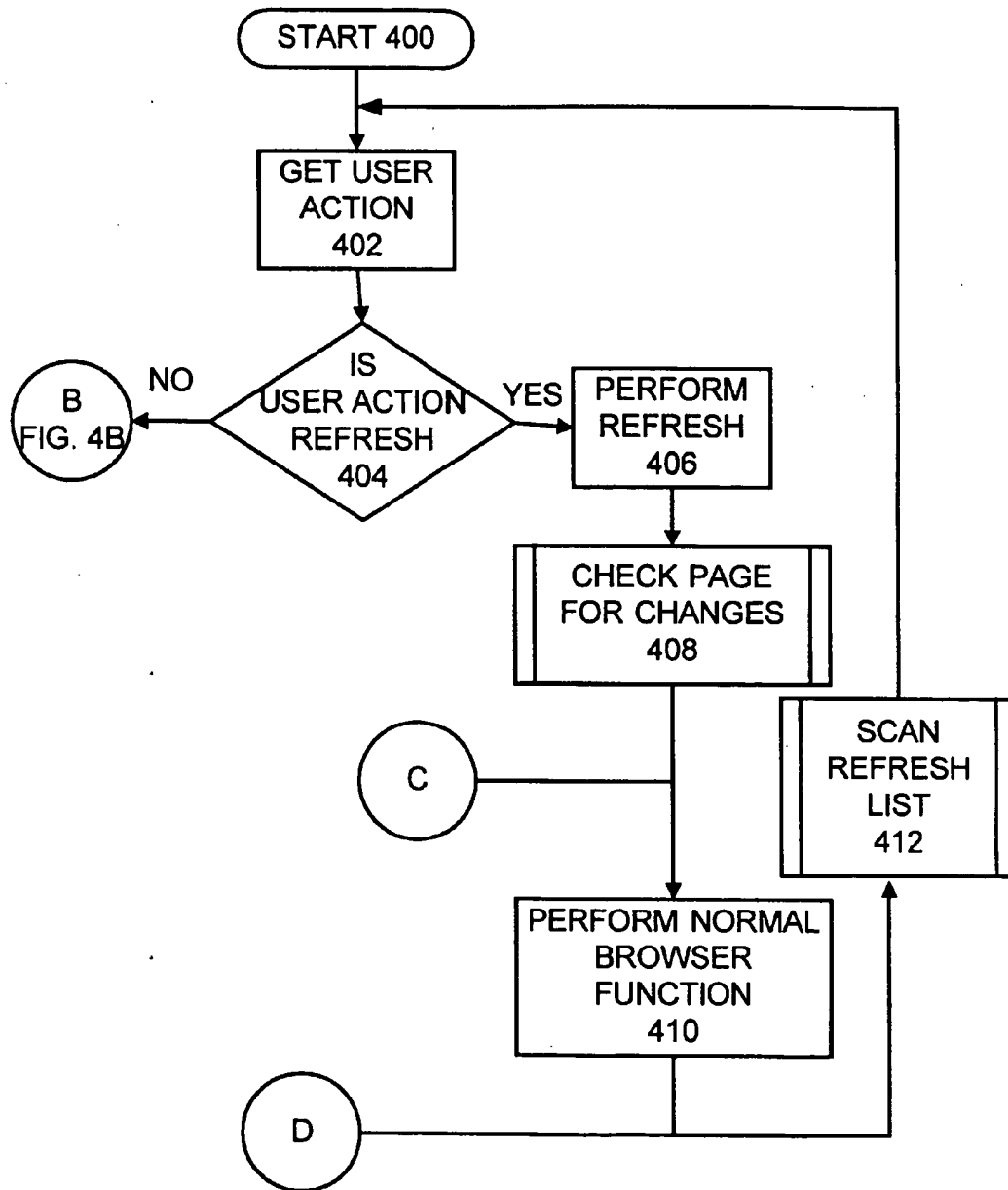
URL 202
REFRESH INTERVAL 204
WEEKEND INTERVAL 206
LAST TIME REFRESHED 208
TIME OF DAY ARRAY 210
CRC OR HASH VALUE 212
AUTO REFRESH ON/OFF 214
LAST TIME ACCESSED 216

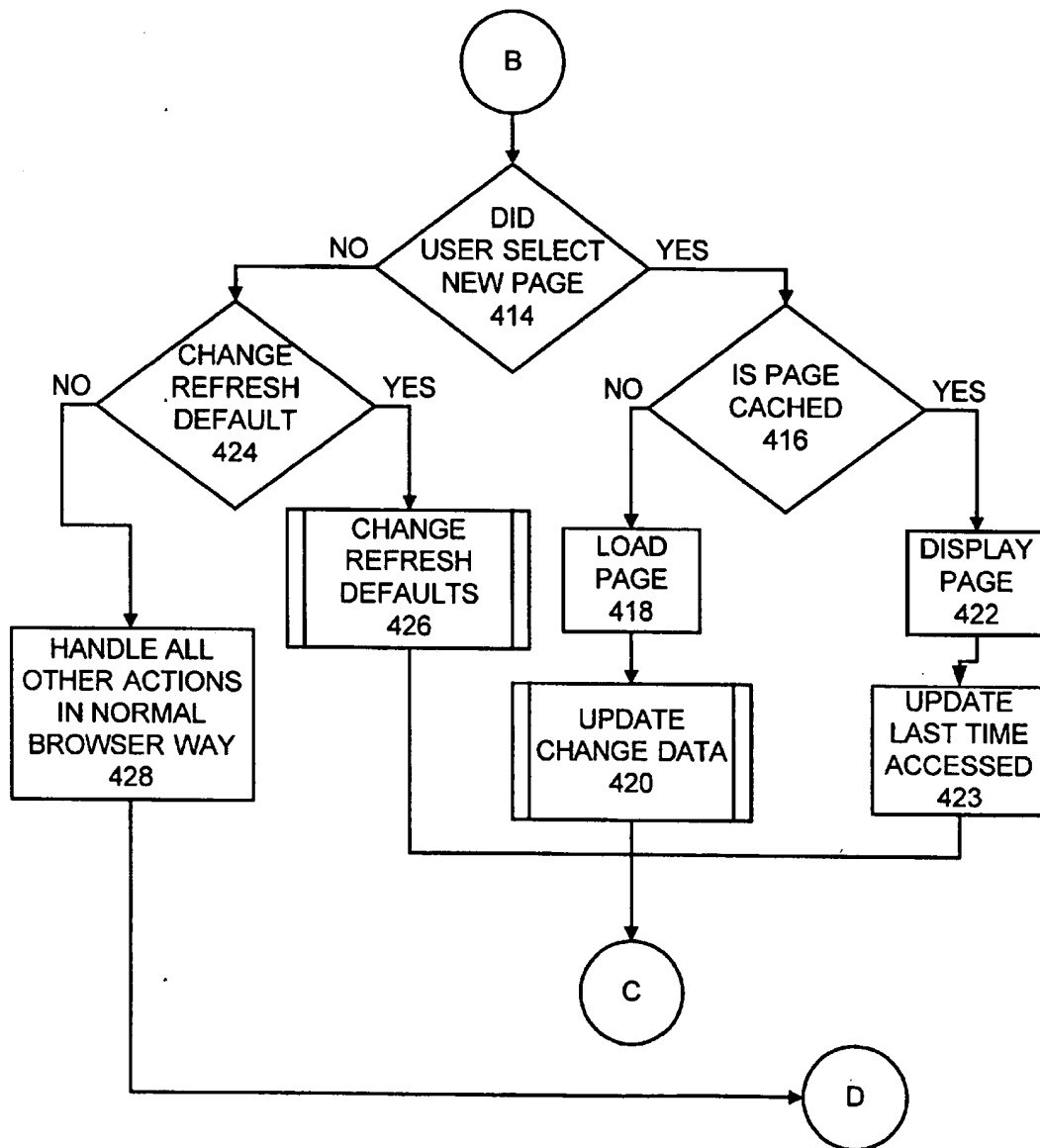
← OPTIONAL

FIG.2

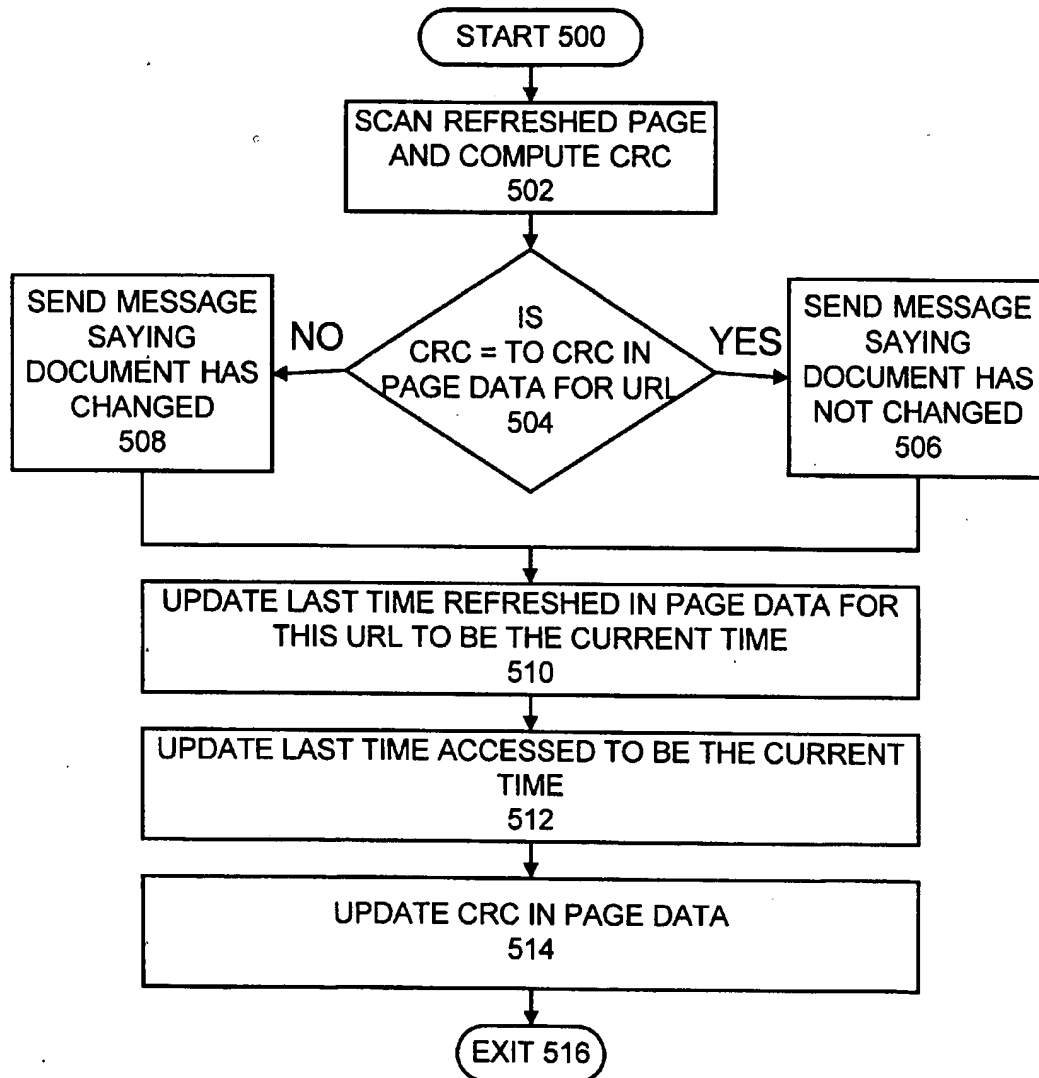
FIG.3FIG.8

MAIN BROWSER

FIG.4A

**FIG. 4B**

CHECK PAGE FOR CHANGES

FIG.5

UPDATE CHANGE DATA

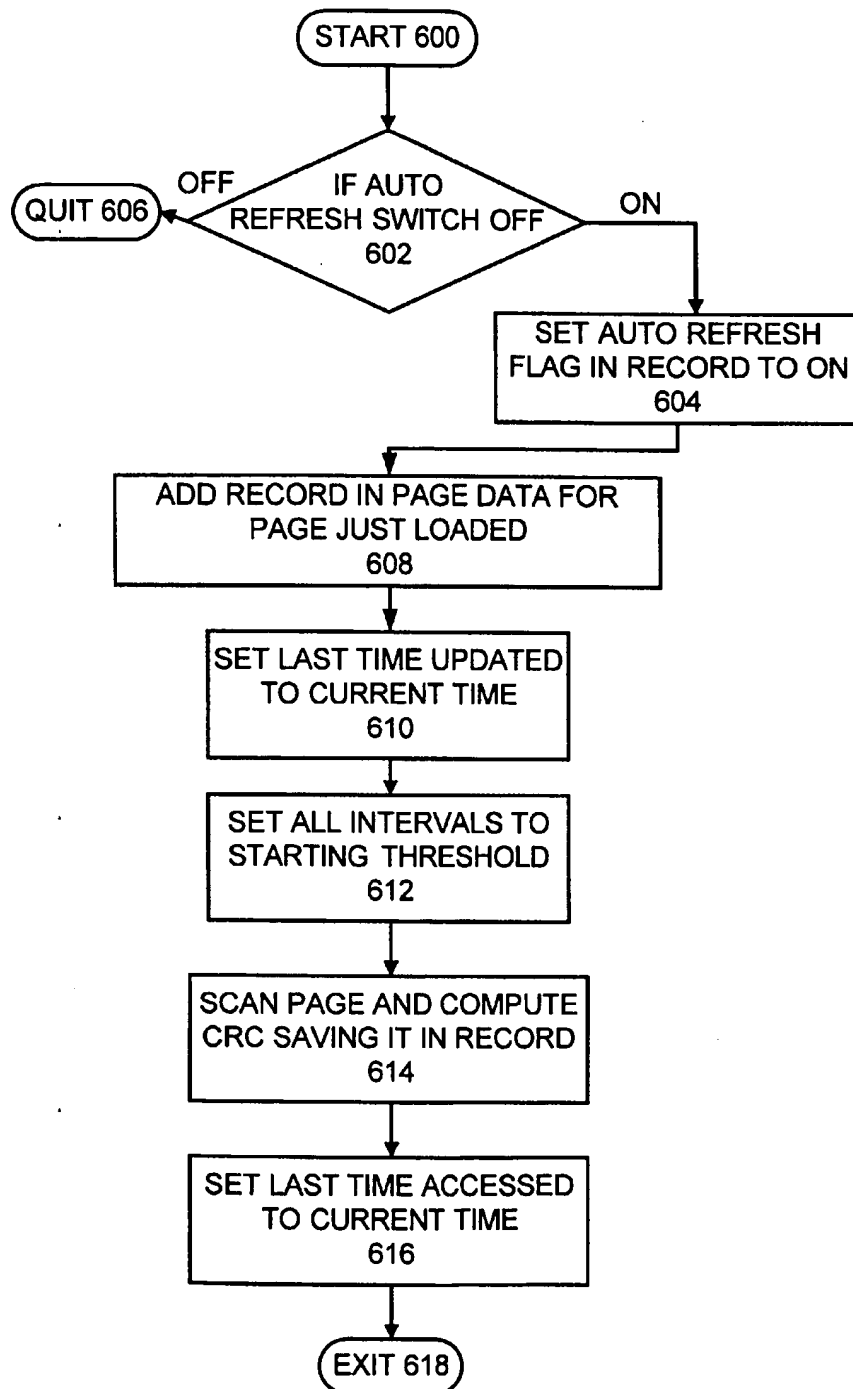
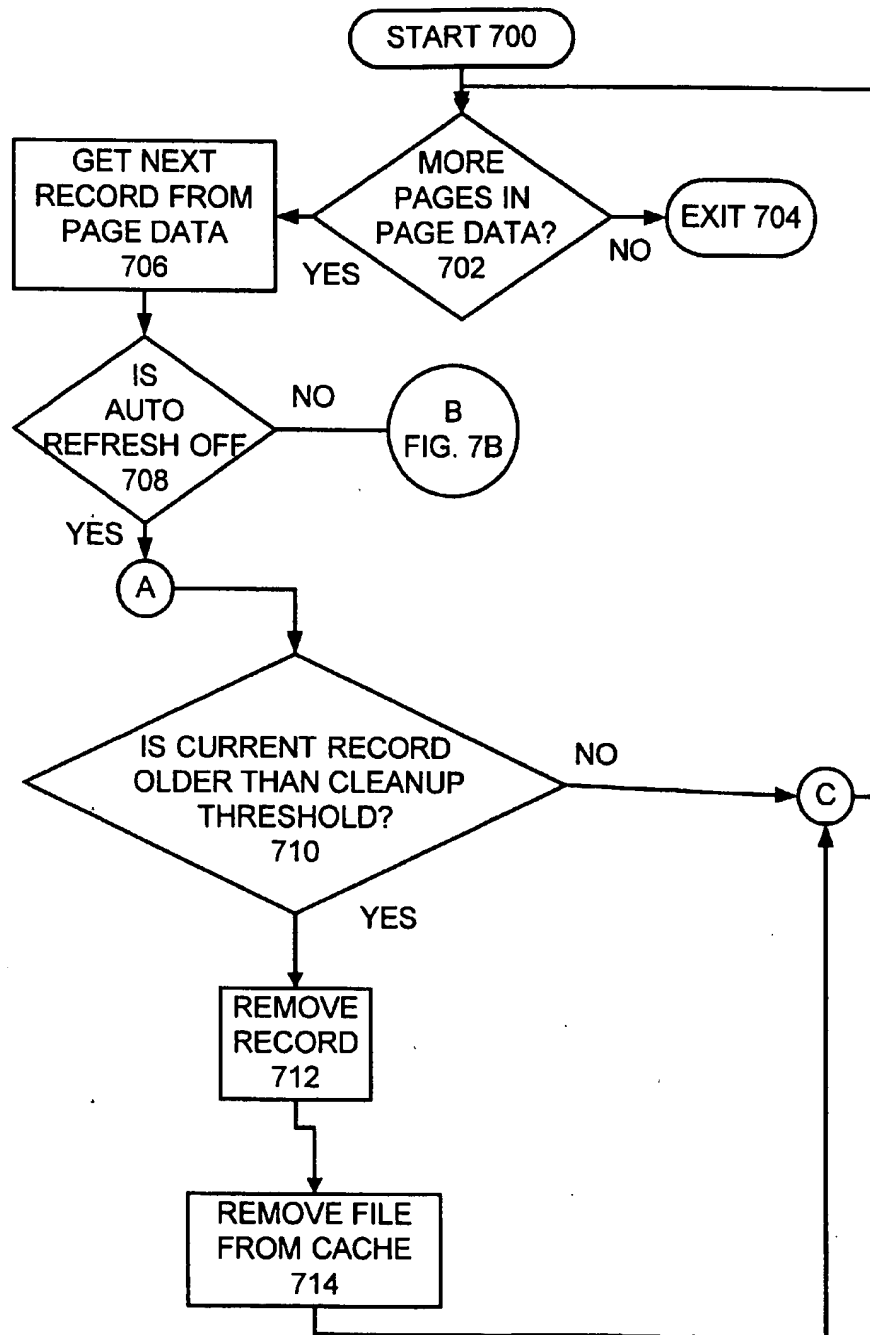
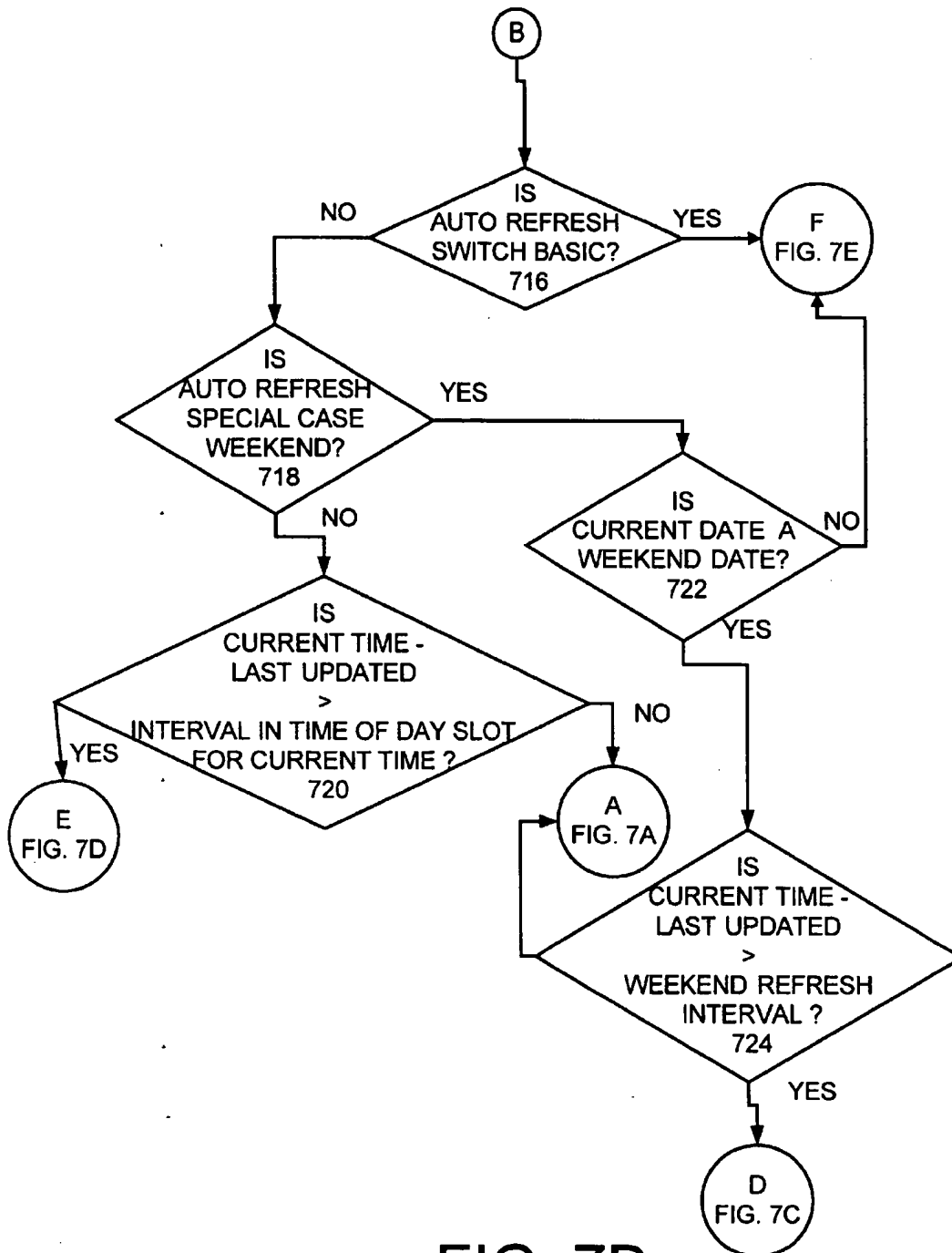
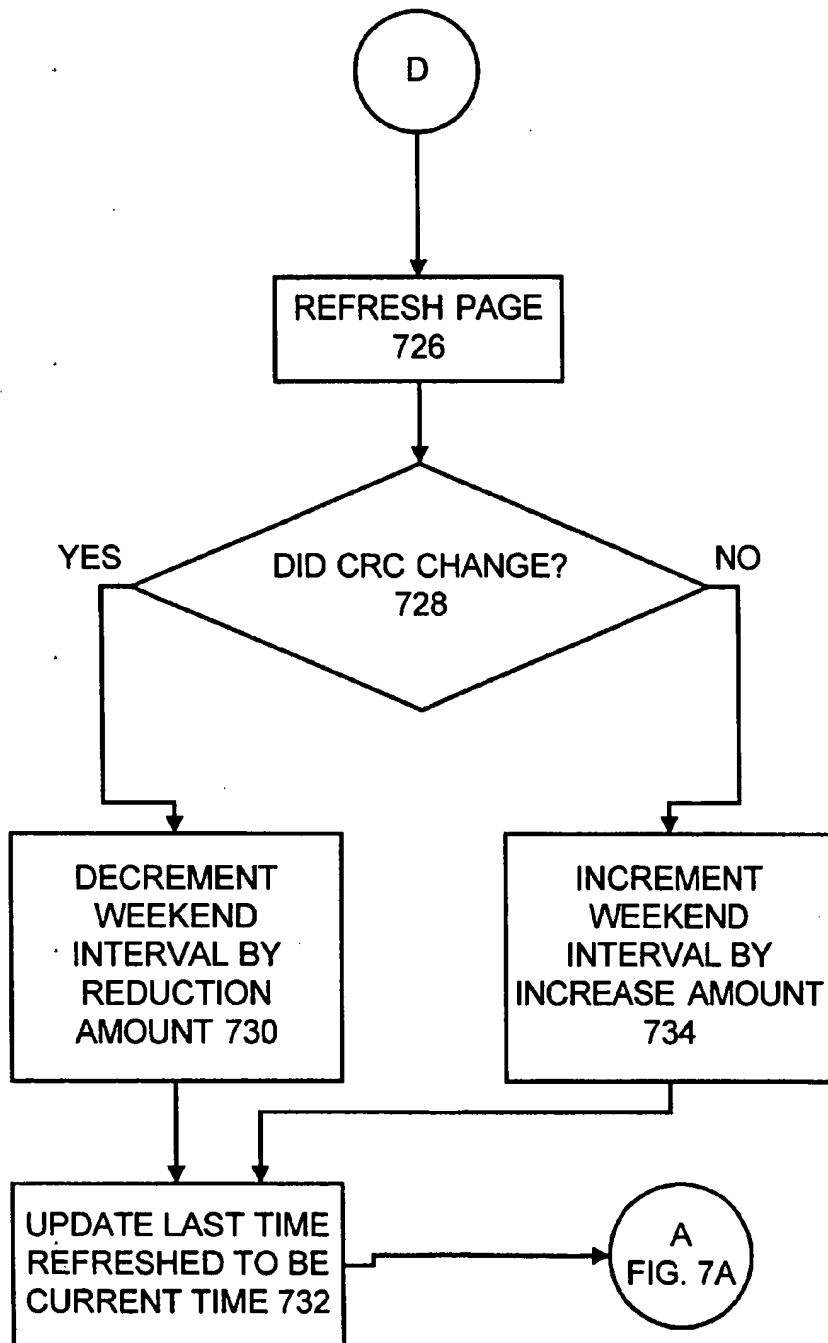


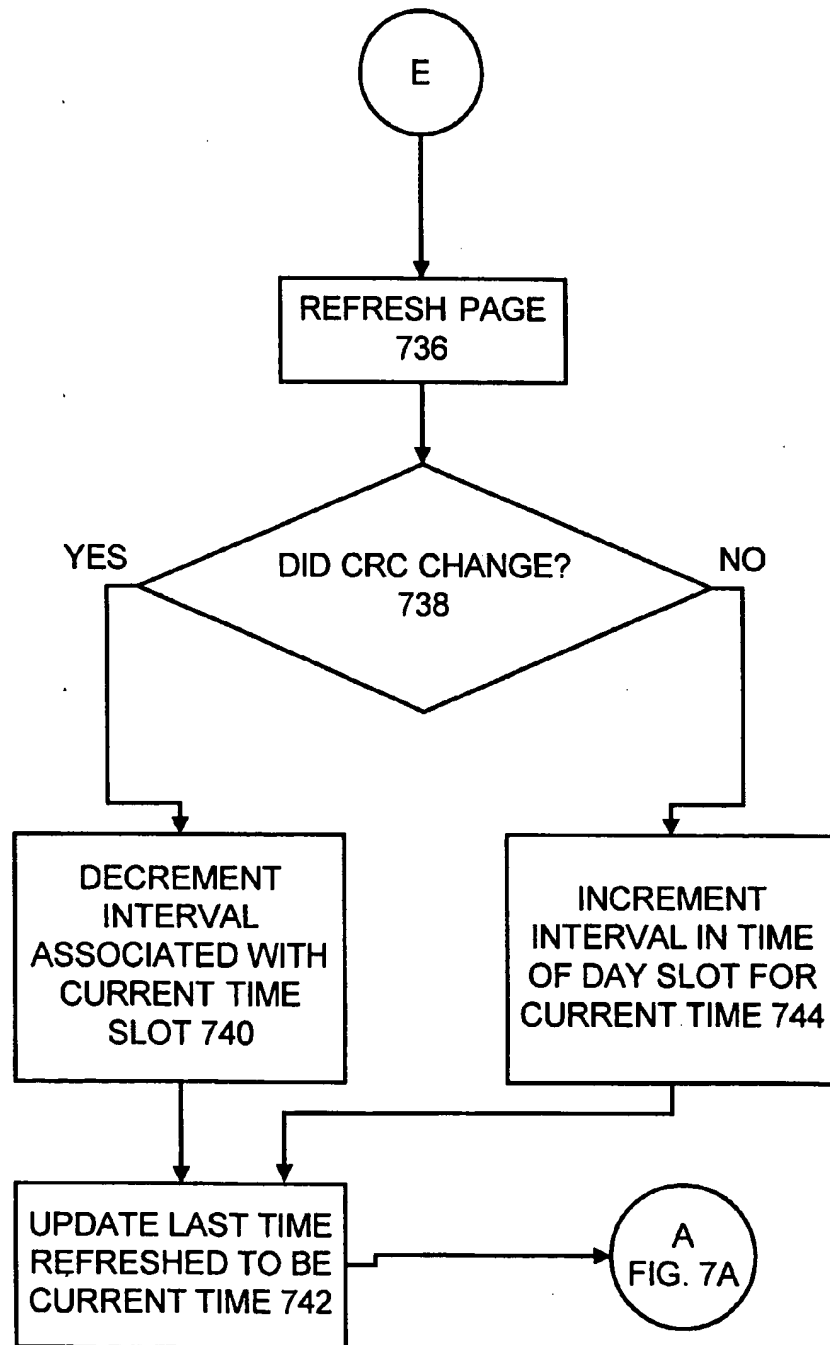
FIG.6

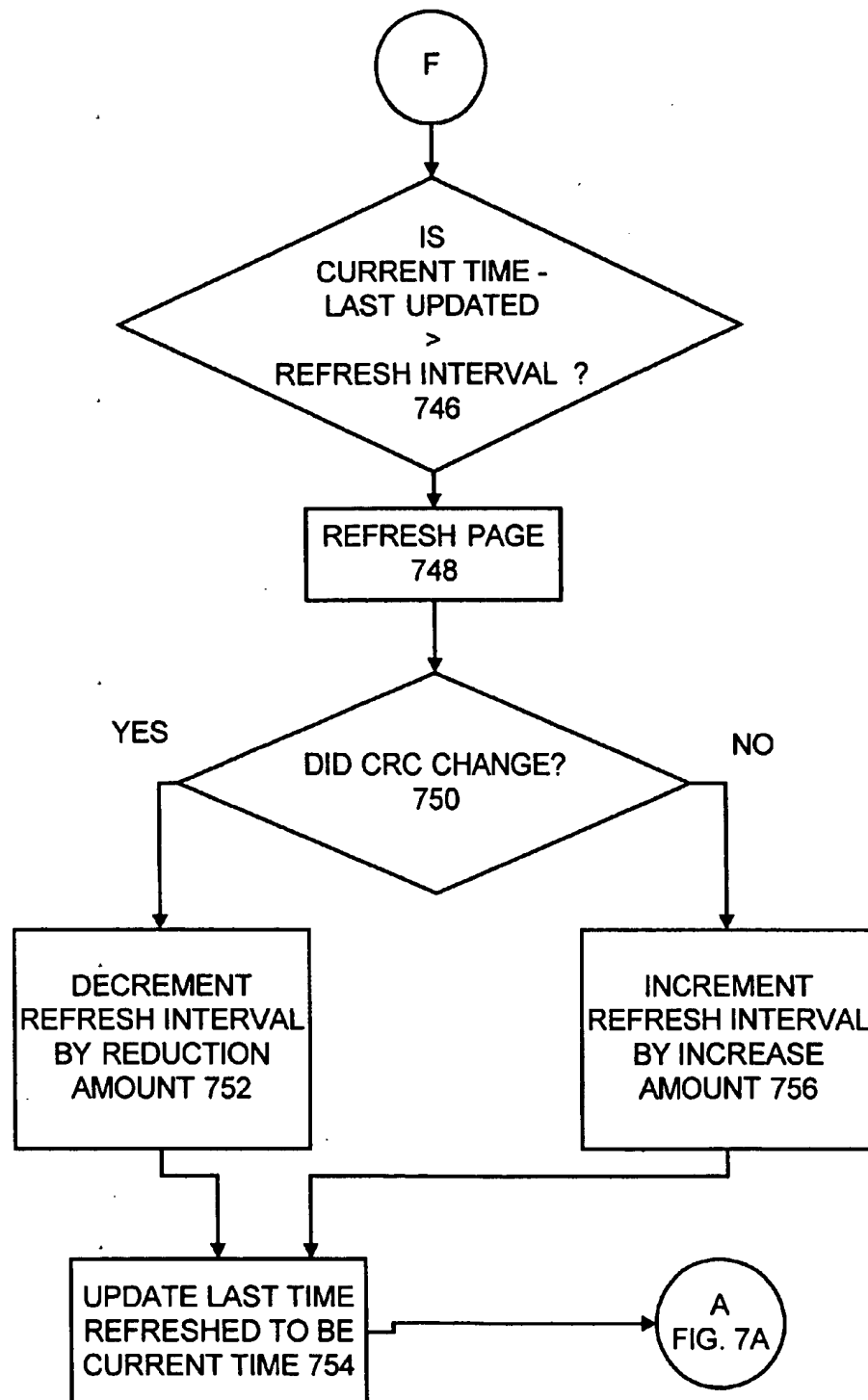
SCAN AUTO REFRESH LIST

FIG. 7A

**FIG. 7B**

FIG. 7C

FIG. 7D

**FIG. 7E**

INTELLIGENT METHOD, APPARATUS AND COMPUTER PROGRAM PRODUCT FOR AUTOMATED REFRESHING OF INTERNET WEB PAGES

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to the data processing field, and more particularly, relates to a method, apparatus and computer program product for automated, intelligent refreshing of internet web pages.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED ART

Valuable information available on the internet or World Wide Web (WWW) is often difficult or cumbersome and time consuming to use for reviewing internet web pages using current browsing technology. Refreshing of WWW sites is not handled well by browsers today. Known techniques typically cause either too much web traffic by refreshing too frequently, or not enough when refreshing is not provided when needed.

Most users keep a list, called either bookmarks or favorites, of the pages they often view. Known commercially available web browser programs include, for example, Netscape Navigator Version 3.01 and Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.0. These browser programs allow the user to specify, on a global browser basis, how often web pages should be refreshed. The choices include always or every time the page is accessed, once per session, or never.

This manual approach, although better than nothing, often is under used, and in many cases not used at all, for control of refreshing. There are too many sites in typical bookmark lists for the average user to manually enter a wise refresh rate for each site. Individual users often lack information needed to effectively select a refresh option to effectively define how often individual pages are updated. Many users pick a higher than needed refresh rate just to be on the safe side, with a resulting needless increase in network traffic.

Another problem with browsers is that feedback of the effectiveness of user selected refresh options is nonexistent. Some internet web pages usually change on an hourly, daily, weekly, or monthly basis. Once a user picks a refresh option, the user has no way of knowing if the selection was a good choice. Of the refreshes that are performed responsive to a particular user selected refresh option, no feedback is provided on how many were needed or how many should have been done.

A need exists for browser technology that enables automated, flexible and efficient refreshing of internet web pages.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A principal object of the present invention is to provide an intelligent method, apparatus and computer program product for automated refreshing of internet web pages. Other important objects of the present invention are to provide such refreshing method, apparatus and computer program product that efficiently and effectively facilitates refreshing of particular internet web pages to be reviewed; to provide such refreshing method, apparatus and computer program product substantially without negative effect; and provide such refreshing method, apparatus and computer program product that overcome many of the disadvantages of prior art arrangements.

In brief, an intelligent method, apparatus and computer program product are provided for automated refreshing of

internet web pages. Page data are stored including a record of page data values for each user selected internet web page. The page data values include at least one refresh interval, a last time refreshed and a last time accessed. A user request for refreshing an internet web page is received and the internet web page is refreshed. Utilizing the refreshed internet web page, checking for changes in the refreshed internet web page is performed. Then scanning the stored page data is performed and for each user selected internet web page, the stored refresh interval is compared with a current refresh time interval. For each user selected internet web page, responsive to the current refresh time interval being greater than the stored refresh time interval, the internet web page is refreshed.

In accordance with features of the invention, a feedback message is sent to the user responsive to refreshing an internet web page and the stored refresh interval is updated.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention together with the above and other objects and advantages may best be understood from the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments of the invention illustrated in the drawings, wherein:

FIG. 1 is a block diagram representation illustrating a computer system for implementing a method for intelligent, automated refreshing of internet web pages in accordance with the invention;

FIGS. 2 and 3 are charts illustrating data structures respectively including exemplary page data and an exemplary auto refresh switch for implementing a method for intelligent, automated refreshing of internet web pages in accordance with the invention;

FIGS. 4A and 4B together provide a flow chart illustrating sequential browser steps for the automated method for refreshing of internet web pages of the preferred embodiment;

FIG. 5 is a flow chart illustrating sequential browser steps for checking for internet web page changes in the automated method for refreshing of internet web pages of the preferred embodiment;

FIG. 6 is a flow chart illustrating sequential browser steps for updating change data in the automated method for refreshing of internet web pages of the preferred embodiment;

FIGS. 7A, 7B, 7C, 7D and 7E together provide a flow chart illustrating sequential browser steps to scan an auto refresh list in the automated method for refreshing of internet web pages of the preferred embodiment;

FIG. 8 is a block diagram illustrating a computer program product in accordance with the preferred embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Having reference now to the drawings, in FIG. 1, there is shown a computer or data processing system of the preferred embodiment generally designated by the reference character 100. As shown in FIG. 1, computer system 100 includes a central processor unit (CPU) 101, a read only memory 102, a random access memory 104, a display adapter 106 coupled to a display 108. CPU 101 is connected to a user interface (UI) adapter 110 connected to a pointer device and keyboard 112. CPU 101 is connected to an input/output (IO) adapter 114 connected to a direct access storage device (DASD) 116 and a tape unit 118. CPU 101 is connected to a communications adapter 120 providing a communications function.

The computer system 100 includes an operating system 130, an internet browser program 132 and a refresh manager 134 of the preferred embodiment.

Various commercially available processors could be used for computer system 100, for example, an IBM personal computer or similar workstation can be used. Central processor unit 101 is suitably programmed to execute the flowchart of FIGS. 4A, 4B, 5, 6, 7A, 7B, 7C, 7D, and 7E of the preferred embodiment.

In accordance with features of the preferred embodiment, internet browser program 132 and refresh manager 134 enables intelligent, automated refreshing for individual user selected internet web pages. Browser 132 provides automatic refresh functions utilizing heuristic data and other techniques and browser 132 provide feedback to the user. This is accomplished with refresh manager 134 maintaining and updating refreshing information together with the bookmarks and favorites data. The computed and personalized refresh rates advantageously are integrated into a bookmark list or the like so that an HTML tag solution is not required, and so that refresh rates can be personalized and overridden. The initial refresh rate may be set in three different ways: 1) by today's browsers with very limited options; 2) by a manual setting; or 3) by loading from an HTML tag within the web site of interest. Disadvantages with the use of an HTML tag result because it is dependent on the site owner keeping it up to date, and the initial setting may be wrong or outdated. If HTML tags eventually are used to provide a refresh rate, this tag is recognized and used to determine a starting point, then this starting point refresh rate is improved by the intelligent method of automated refreshing of the present invention.

The intelligent method of automated refreshing of the present invention provides the feedback to the user. For example, a user may be interested in a web site that tracks prices of a distributor of products used in the user's business. Suppose that the refresh rate is initially set for 1 hour, using either of the three above options. The user needs to know if this was a good value or is consuming too much traffic, or not refreshing often enough. The user needs to know how to adjust or fine tune the refreshing rate with minimal effort. In accordance with features of the preferred embodiment, internet browser program 132 and refresh manager 134 provide at each refresh, a checksum or other technique that is used to determine if the site page has changed since the last refresh. This information is presented to the user. Appropriate graphs or warning signals are given, such as "you are refreshing too often", or "this site has high activity and you may want to refresh more often."

The intelligent method of automated refreshing of the present invention heuristically adjusts the refreshing rate using the initial rate as a start, based on history, including provisions for special cases, such as weekends and holidays. The user can subsequently manually override this automatically generated schedule. However, without the automatic refreshing rate adjustment of the preferred embodiment, the user may never figure out the best refresh rates, or more likely never have the time or inclination to try. Use of the intelligent method of automated refreshing of the present invention can be extremely valuable for reducing network traffic.

For example, the intelligent method of automated refreshing of the present invention may determine that a site changes every hour from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays. Or, alternatively, it may compute that a site changes every week day at noon, and key in on the provider's schedule for

updating the site. Other sites might be updated on weekends, or have high activity during certain seasons of the year, which could then be automatically reflected in their refresh rates. On the other hand, if after time the site is determined to be erratic in its updates, so that a refresh schedule is hard to automate, a formula can at least determine times to block out refreshing, such as midnight to 5 a.m. local time of the provider of the site. Even this minimal amount of optimization could save large amounts of network traffic, which today's schemes for refreshing do not take into account. If a site is found to be inactive over some period of time, in addition to appropriately adjusting the refresh schedule, a warning message can be generated to indicate that the site has not changed in an identified number of weeks, months or years.

Referring now to FIG. 2, an exemplary page structure 200 is illustrated for implementing the method for intelligent, automated refreshing of internet web pages in accordance with the invention. Page data structure 200 is persistent from one run of the browser program 132 to another. Page data structure 200 includes a universal resource locator (URL) 202, a refresh interval 204, a weekend interval 206, a last time refreshed 208, a time of day array 210, a cyclic redundancy check (CRC) or hash value 212, an auto refresh ON/OFF 214, and a last time accessed 216.

Page data structure 200 is stored as a list or array of the records 202, 204, 206, 208, 210, 212, 214, 216 for each user selected internet web page in a bookmark list or favorites data for a particular user. The refresh interval 204 defines a time interval to refresh a page in cache when this much time has passed. The weekend interval 206 defines a refresh time interval to refresh a page in cache that is used only on weekends. A time of day array is a collection of refresh intervals, such as one for each hour which is used to a page during a particular hour of the day. The CRC or hash value 212 is an integer value used to determine if a page has changed, for example, determined by adding together all the bytes in a page.

FIG. 3 illustrates an exemplary auto refresh switch data structure 300 for implementing the method for intelligent, automated refreshing of internet web pages in accordance with the invention. Auto refresh switch 300 includes multiple fields for defining a plurality of refreshing operational modes including off 302, basic 304, special_case_weekends 306 and time_of_day 308.

Referring to FIGS. 4A and 4B, there are shown exemplary sequential steps of browser 132 for implementing the method for intelligent, automated refreshing of internet web pages starting at a block 400. A user action is received as indicated at a block 402. It is determined whether the user action to refresh a web page as indicated at a decision block 404. If not, then the sequential operations continue following entry point B in FIG. 4B. When a user action to refresh a web page is identified at block 404, then refreshing is performed as indicated at a block 406. Then a routine illustrated and described with respect to FIG. 5, to check the page for changes is performed as indicated at a block 408. Then the normal browser function is performed as indicated at a block 410. Then a routine illustrated and described with respect to FIGS. 7A, 7B, 7C, 7D and 7E, to scan an automatic refresh list or page data is performed as indicated at a block 412. Then the sequential operations return to block 402 to get a user action.

Referring to FIG. 4B, when a user action to refresh a web page is not identified at block 404, then checking whether the user selected a new page is provided as indicated at a

decision block 414. If the user selected a new page, then checking whether the page is stored in cache is provided as indicated at a decision block 416. If the page is not cached, then the page is loaded as indicated at a block 418. Next a routine illustrated and described with respect to FIG. 6, is performed to update change data as indicated at a block 420. If determined that the page is cached at block 416, then the page is displayed as indicated at a block 422. Then the sequential operations return to block 410 in FIG. 4A following entry point C to perform the normal browser function.

In FIG. 4B, when the user did not select a new page at block 414, then checking to change refresh defaults is performed as indicated at a decision block 424. If yes, a routine to change refresh defaults is performed as indicated at a block 426. The refresh default values updated at block 426 can include a starting threshold or initial refresh interval, a reduction amount or amount to reduce refresh intervals by when a page changes so that refreshing occurs more often, an increase amount or amount to increase refresh intervals by when a page does not change so that refreshing occurs less frequently, and a cleanup threshold or time interval that a page has not been accessed to remove page from cache. Otherwise when change refresh default is not indicated at block 424, then all other actions are handled in the normal function of browser 132. Then the sequential operations return to block 412 in FIG. 4A following entry point D to scan the refresh list.

Referring to FIG. 5, there are shown exemplary sequential steps of browser 132 for checking for internet web page changes in the automated method for intelligent, automated refreshing of internet web pages starting at a block 500. As indicated at a block 502, the refreshed page from block 406 in FIG. 4A is scanned and the CRC is computed. Then the calculated CRC is compared to the CRC 212 in the data data 200 for this URL 202 as indicated at a decision block 504. If the calculated and stored CRCs are equal, then a message is sent saying that the document has not changed as indicated at a block 506. Otherwise if the calculated and stored CRCs are not equal, then a message is sent saying that the document has changed as indicated at a block 508. Then the last time refreshed value 208 for this URL 202 in the page data 200 is updated to be the current time as indicated at a block 510. Next the last time accessed value 216 for this URL 202 in the page data 200 is updated to be the current time as indicated at a block 512. Then the CRC value 212 for this URL 202 in the page data 200 is updated to be the calculated CRC as indicated at a block 514. Then the routine is exited as indicated at a block 516 and the sequential operations return.

Referring to FIG. 6, there are shown exemplary sequential steps of browser 132 for updating change data in the automated method for intelligent, automated refreshing of internet web pages starting at a block 600. Checking whether the auto refresh switch off is performed as indicated at a decision block 602. If the auto refresh switch is on, then an auto refresh flag is set in a page data record to on as indicated at a block 604. Otherwise, if the auto refresh switch is off, then the operations stop as indicated at a block 606. After the auto refresh flag is set to on at block 604, the record is added in page data 200 for a particular page just loaded as indicated at a block 608. The last time updated or refreshed 208 is set to the current time as indicated at a block 610. All intervals 204, 206, 210 are set to the starting threshold value to define an initial refresh interval as indicated at a block 612; as discussed above, the initial refresh interval value can be obtained from an HTML tag for the page. The page just

loaded is scanned and a CRC is computed and saved in the record as indicated at a block 614. Next the last time accessed value 216 for this URL 202 in the page data 200 is set to be the current time as indicated at a block 616. Then the routine is exited as indicated at a block 618 and the sequential operations return.

Referring to FIGS. 7A, 7B, 7C, 7D and 7E, there are shown exemplary sequential steps of browser 132 to scan the auto refresh list in the automated method for intelligent, automated refreshing of internet web pages starting at a block 700 in FIG. 7A. Checking for more pages to scan in the page data is performed as indicated at a decision block 702. When there are no more pages to scan, the routine is exited as indicated at a block 704. When there are more pages to scan, then a next recorded is obtained from the page data 200 as indicated at a block 706. Checking whether the auto refresh switch is off is performed as indicated at a decision block 708. If the auto refresh switch is not off, then the sequential operations continue following entry point B in FIG. 7B. When the auto refresh switch is off, then following entry point A checking whether the current record is older that the cleanup threshold is performed as indicated at a decision block 710. If the current record is not older that the cleanup threshold, then the sequential operations return following entry point C to block 702 to check for more pages.

Referring to FIG. 7B, when determined that the auto refresh switch is not off at block 708 in FIG. 7A, then checking whether the auto refresh switch is set to basic as indicated at a block 716. If so, then the sequential operations continue following entry point F in FIG. 7E. Otherwise if the auto refresh switch is not set to basic, then checking whether the auto refresh switch is set to special case weekend is performed as indicated at a decision block 718. If the auto refresh switch is not set to special case weekend, then the current time less the last updated time is compared with the interval in the time of day slot for the current time as indicated at a decision block 720. If the resulting value for the current time less the last updated time is not greater the interval in the time of day slot for the current time, then the sequential operations return following entry point A for checking whether the current record is older that the cleanup threshold at decision block 710. Otherwise when the resulting value for the current time less the last updated time is greater the interval in the time of day slot for the current time, then the sequential operations continue following entry point E in FIG. 7D. When the auto refresh switch is set to special case weekend at block 718, then checking whether the current date is a weekend date is performed as indicated at a decision block 722. If the current date is not a weekend date, then the sequential operations continue following entry point F in FIG. 7E. When the current date is a weekend date, then the current time less the last updated value is compared with the stored weekend refresh interval as indicated at a decision block 724. If the current time less the last updated value is not greater than the stored weekend refresh interval, then the sequential operations return following entry point A for checking whether the current record is older that the cleanup threshold at decision block 710. If the current time less the last updated value is greater than the stored weekend refresh interval, then the sequential operations continue following entry point D in FIG. 7C.

Referring to FIG. 7C, then this page in the page data 200 is refreshed as indicated at a block 726. Checking whether the CRC value 212 changed is performed as indicated at a decision block 728. If the CRC value 212 changed, then the weekend interval is decremented by a stored reduction

amount as indicated at a block 730 so that refreshing occurs more often. Then the last time refreshed is updated to be the current time as indicated at a block 732 and the sequential operations return following entry point A in FIG. 7A. If the CRC value 212 did not change, then the weekend interval is incremented by a stored increase amount as indicated at a block 734. Then the last time refreshed is updated to be the current time at block 732 and the sequential operations return following entry point A in FIG. 7A for checking whether the current record is older than the cleanup threshold at decision block 710.

Referring to FIG. 7C, then this page in the page data 200 is refreshed as indicated at a block 736. Checking whether the CRC value 212 changed is performed as indicated at a decision block 738. If the CRC value 212 changed, then the interval associated with the time of day slot is decremented by a stored reduction amount as indicated at a block 740. Then the last time refreshed is updated to be the current time as indicated at a block 742 and the sequential operations return following entry point A in FIG. 7A. If the CRC value 212 did not change, then the interval associated with the time of day slot is incremented by a stored increase amount as indicated at a block 744. Then the last time refreshed is updated to be the current time at block 742 and the sequential operations return following entry point A in FIG. 7A for checking whether the current record is older than the cleanup threshold at decision block 710.

Referring to FIG. 7E, the auto refresh switch is set to basic at block 716 in FIG. 7B, then the sequential operations continue following entry point F with checking whether the current time less the last time updated is greater than the refresh interval as indicated at a decision block 742. Then this page in the page data 200 is refreshed as indicated at a block 744. Checking whether the CRC value 212 changed is performed as indicated at a decision block 746. If the CRC value 212 changed, then the refresh interval is decremented by a stored reduction amount as indicated at a block 748. Then the last time refreshed is updated to be the current time as indicated at a block 750 and the sequential operations return following entry point A in FIG. 7A. If the CRC value 212 did not change, then the refresh interval is incremented by a stored increase amount as indicated at a block 752. Then the last time refreshed is updated to be the current time at block 750 and the sequential operations return following entry point A in FIG. 7A for checking whether the current record is older than the cleanup threshold at decision block 710.

Referring now to FIG. 8, an article of manufacture or a computer program product 800 of the invention is illustrated. The computer program product 800 includes a recording medium 802, such as, a floppy disk, a high capacity read only memory in the form of an optically read compact disk or CD-ROM, a tape, a transmission type media such as a digital or analog communications link, or a similar computer program product. Recording medium 802 stores program means 804, 806, 808, 810 on the medium 802 for carrying out the methods for intelligent, automated refreshing of internet web pages of the preferred embodiment in the system 100 of FIG. 1.

A sequence of program instructions or a logical assembly of one or more interrelated modules defined by the recorded program means 804, 806, 808, 810, direct the computer system 100 for implementing intelligent, automated refreshing of internet web pages of the preferred embodiment.

In the preferred embodiment of a dynamic refresh mechanism, the refresh rate is constantly adjusted by incre-

menting and decrementing. If it is incremented and decremented by equal amounts, the refresh rate will approach a value near which the web page will have been changed approximately 50% of the time. However, any of various alternative formulations could be used to adjust the refresh rate. For example, different values could be used for incrementing and decrementing, causing the refresh rate to converge on a higher or lower value. Furthermore, the system could adjust the refresh rate based on an average over multiple refresh intervals, rather than adjust with each refresh interval. Additionally, any of various methods can be used to cause rapid convergence of the refresh rate on an optimal value, followed by stable behavior once the refresh rate is near the optimal value. For example, the adjustment amount could include an aging coefficient, whereby the amount of the adjustment is initially high, and decreases over time as it is assumed that the refresh rate will converge on an optimal value. Alternatively, the adjustment amount could be decreased each time an adjustment (higher or lower refresh rate) is in a different direction from the previous adjustment. Finally, it may be desirable to impose minimum and maximum limits on the refresh rate, so that the rate does not reach unreasonable levels. For example, some web pages may be updated with extreme frequency, and it may be undesirable to attempt to keep up with all the updates.

In the preferred embodiment, a computer system automatically adjusts the refresh rate in response to a determination that the rate should be adjusted, although it is possible to manually override any adjusted rate. In an alternative embodiment, it would be possible for the system to compute the adjustment and provide an appropriate message to the user, requiring user confirmation before storing the adjusted value for the refresh rate.

While the present invention has been described with reference to the details of the embodiments of the invention shown in the drawing, these details are not intended to limit the scope of the invention as claimed in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for refreshing an internet web page, comprising the steps of:

- (a) storing a refresh rate for refreshing said internet web page;
- (b) refreshing said internet web page at said stored refresh rate to receive at least one refreshed internet web page;
- (c) automatically determining, from said at least one refreshed internet web page, an amount to adjust said stored refresh rate;
- (d) adjusting said stored refresh rate in response to automatically determining said amount to adjust said stored refresh rate; and
- (e) repeating steps (b) through (d) to dynamically adjust said refresh rate.

2. The method for refreshing an internet web page of claim 1, wherein said step (c) of automatically determining an amount to adjust said stored refresh rate comprises the steps of:

- automatically determining whether said internet web page has changed since a previous refresh;
- automatically determining to increment said refresh rate if said said internet web page has changed; and
- automatically determining to decrement said refresh rate if said internet web page has not changed.

3. The method for refreshing an internet web page of claim 1, wherein said step (c) of automatically determining

an amount to adjust said stored refresh rate comprises comparing calculated CRC values for respective refreshed copies of an internet web page to determine whether said page has changed since a previous refresh operation.

4. The method for refreshing an internet web page of claim 1, further comprising the step of sending a message for user viewing in response to automatically determining an amount to adjust said stored refresh rate.

5. A computer program product for displaying and refreshing an internet web page, said computer program product including a plurality of computer executable instructions stored on a computer readable medium, wherein said instructions, when executed by said computer, cause the computer to perform the steps of:

- (a) storing a refresh rate for refreshing said internet web page;
- (b) requesting refresh of said internet web page at said stored refresh rate to receive at least one refreshed internet web page;
- (c) automatically determining, from said at least one refreshed internet web page, an amount to adjust said stored refresh rate;
- (d) storing an adjusted refresh rate based on said amount to adjust said stored refresh rate; and
- (e) repeating steps (b) through (d) to dynamically adjust said refresh rate.

6. The computer program product of claim 5, wherein said step (c) of automatically determining an amount to adjust said stored refresh rate comprises the steps of:

- automatically determining whether said internet web page has changed since a previous refresh;
- automatically determining to increment said refresh rate if said said internet web page has changed; and

automatically determining to decrement said refresh rate if said internet web page has not changed.

7. The computer program product of claim 5, wherein said step (c) of automatically determining an amount to adjust said stored refresh rate comprises comparing calculated CRC values for respective refreshed copies of an internet web page to determine whether said page has changed since a previous refresh operation.

8. The computer program product of claim 5, wherein said instructions, when executed by said computer, further cause the computer to perform the step of sending a message for user viewing in response to automatically determining an amount to adjust said stored refresh rate.

9. The computer program product of claim 5, wherein said instructions, when executed by said computer, further cause the computer to perform the steps of:

- sending a message for user viewing in response to automatically determining an amount to adjust said stored refresh rate; and
- receiving confirmation from said user to adjust said stored refresh rate, said step (d) of storing an adjusted refresh rate being performed in response to receiving said confirmation.

10. The computer program product of claim 5, wherein said step (d) of storing an adjusted refresh rate is performed automatically by said computer in response to said step (c) of automatically determining an amount to adjust said stored refresh rate, said adjusted refresh rate being calculated from said amount to adjust said stored refresh rate.

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